

[0023] FIG. 4D is a 11.5× magnification photograph of a cross-sectional view of a pancake component removed from a cooking surface when the center of the top surface reached a temperature of about 160° F.

[0024] FIG. 5A is an unmagnified photograph of a cross-sectional view of a pancake component removed from a cooking surface when the center of the top surface reached a temperature of about 180° F.

[0025] FIG. 5B is a photograph of a top surface view of a pancake component removed from a cooking surface when the center of the top surface reached a temperature of about 180° F.

[0026] FIG. 5C is a microscopy image of a pancake component that was removed from a cooking surface when the center of the top surface reached a temperature of about 180° F.

[0027] FIG. 5D is a 11.5× magnification photograph of a cross-sectional view of a pancake component removed from a cooking surface when the center of the top surface reached a temperature of about 180° F.

[0028] FIG. 6A is an unmagnified photograph of a cross-sectional view of a pancake component removed from a cooking surface when the pancake component was completely cooked.

[0029] FIG. 6B is a photograph of a top surface view of a pancake component removed from a cooking surface when the pancake component was completely cooked.

[0030] FIG. 6C is a microscopy image of a pancake component that was removed from a cooking surface when the pancake component was completely cooked.

[0031] FIG. 6D is a 11.5× magnification photograph of a cross-sectional view of a pancake component removed from a cooking surface when the pancake component was completely cooked.

[0032] FIG. 7 is a photograph of a cross sectional view of the two halves of a cooked filled pancake.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0033] It has been discovered that batter-derived food products with filling can be made by depositing the filling prior to complete gelatinization of the batter. A food product, particularly a pancake, can be made that has a filling completely encased within gelatinized batter. In particular, the filled food product contains a food structure that includes cooked, hydrated flour that is continuous and surrounds the filling.

[0034] The food structure of the filled food products described herein include a spongy, short and tender structure referred to herein as the “spongy structure”. Short and tender refers to food products that are porous with an aerated structure and a continuous cell network characteristic of batter-derived food products. The spongy structure generally can be ripped apart more easily than typical dough-derived food products since the spongy structure has little or no elasticity. Food products with the spongy structure generally have a lower level of gluten development than dough products.

[0035] The spongy structure is generally found in food products that are made from batter, i.e. batter-derived food products. Batter, in contrast with a dough, has a high water content and can have moderate to low viscosity such that the batter spreads when applied to a cooking surface. The filled products described herein also include a filling that is encased within the spongy food structure.

[0036] The filled food products described herein preferably are fully cooked. By fully cooked, it is meant that substantially all of the batter in the product has been gelatinized and that the product has achieved a desirable golden brown color on the surface. The starch granules in the batters described herein can be either in the gelatinized state or the ungelatinized state during the cooking process. As the batter is cooked, the batter becomes set and begins to acquire the spongy structure. In addition, the starch granules in the batter start to gelatinize. As the starch granules gelatinize, the batter appears wet and flowable and can become sticky. When substantially all of the starch granules gelatinize, the wet and flowable appearance on the surface is replaced by a spongy structure that is drier and therefore, not sticky.

[0037] The spongy structure of the cooked filled food products generally has a high moisture content. The moisture content of the batter-derived portion of the food products is generally at least about 20 percent by weight, preferably between about 25 percent by weight and about 60 percent by weight. The filled food products can be any number of batter-derived products including, for example, pancakes, waffles, muffins, and cakes. In particular, the filled food product can appear to be a single, continuous structure that completely surrounds the filling with gelatinized batter rather than two components that were combined as in a sandwich.

[0038] The filled food products described herein are generally made by generating a partially cooked food component from the batter and depositing the filling on the ungelatinized surface of the partially cooked food component. The partially cooked food component may then be combined with another partially cooked food component and further heated to produce a sealed, fully cooked food product with the spongy structure and the filling encased within the spongy structure. The overlapping ungelatinized surfaces form a seamless cooked structure sealing the filling within the product. Alternatively, the filling may be deposited in a partially cooked food component that has been cooked with heat applied on the top surface and the bottom surface. After an initial cooking period during which sufficient spongy structure forms at the bottom to hold the filling, but where the center still includes ungelatinized batter, the filling is deposited. The partially cooked food component with the filling is further heated to generate the fully cooked food product.

[0039] In some embodiments, the filled food products are filled pancakes. The filled pancakes are generally produced by depositing two aliquots of batter on a cooking surface. The batter has a fluid consistency such that it spreads to a reasonable thickness on the cooking surface. The two aliquots of batter preferably contain similar amounts of batter and more preferably about equal amounts of batter. The aliquots of batter are heated for an appropriate length of time to form partially cooked pancake components.

[0040] Partially cooked pancake components will be referred to herein as pancake components. Pancake compo-